

Roots and Branches

HARTMAN RECTOR, JR.

I'm happy to be able to greet you here this morning in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a devotional at the Lord's university. I am persuaded that this is his university. I am sure he has many of his children scattered about the world in different universities, but this is his.

How glorious it is to be here this morning, to listen to Sister Harris and her lovely sisters and their beautiful music, to be in the presence of these special witnesses of the Lord (and there must be two thousand of them over here), and to be in your presence.

Families in Earth and Heaven

We all have something in common—each of us. We are part of a family. We have a mother and a father, each one of us does. I know that's true because we can't get here any other way. And families are very important to the Lord. The greatest blessings that the Lord has designed for his children will be received in a family relationship. It is part of the plan of salvation that we would come to this earth, we would have earthly parents, and each of us would have a body of flesh and bones. They would provide it for us, obviously with the help of our Heavenly Father, who, I believe, has a hand in when we

come and the fact that we do come. I believe that because prophets have made it very plain.

The great prophet by the name of King Benjamin, with whom you are all familiar, says,

And now, in the first place, he hath created you, and granted unto you your lives, for which ye are indebted unto him. [Sounds as if he had a hand in your coming, doesn't it?]

I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your will, and even supporting you from one moment to another —.[Mosiah 2:23, 21]

The Lord supports us.

Paul added to that when he said, as recorded in Acts, to those on Mars Hill who were worshiping the unknown God:

Hartman Rector, Jr., was a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this devotional address was given at Brigham Young University on 10 February 1981.

*God that made the world and all things therein,
seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth
not in temples made with hands;*

*Neither is worshipped with men's hands as
though he needed any thing—*

[There is very little we can give to the Lord
except a broken heart and a contrite spirit. He
would love to have that.]

*—seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all
things;*

*And hath made of one blood all the nations of
men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and
hath determined the times before appointed, and the
bounds of their habitation. [Acts 17:24–26]*

We have a Heavenly Father, each of us, who
is very concerned about us. We are begotten
sons and daughters unto him, and so we have
earthly parents and we have heavenly parents.
Our Heavenly Father is concerned about us.

It is great to know that, isn't it? He is con-
cerned, and he does much for us. As a matter
of fact, President Brigham Young said one time
that, when you walk back into the presence of
your Heavenly Father, you will find that he has
done everything godly possibly for your exal-
tation. He leaves no stone unturned. So, as the
family of God, we have to promote his pur-
poses and to bear witness of this basic, funda-
mental truth wherever we go.

Families under Attack

Families are under very serious attack
throughout the world at this time—make no
mistake about that. I had an opportunity to
visit with five students from the People's
Democratic Republic of China recently.

We like to host people from other countries
who are in Utah going to school or extending
their education, and we do so up at the Church
Office Building periodically. We like to do that
because we want them to understand that we
appreciate the hospitality that is extended to

our missionaries throughout the world. For the
most part, they extend warm hospitality to us.
Of course, there are places we would like to go
where we have not been permitted to go as yet.
So we invite them up, and we host them and
have an opportunity to tell them something
about why Salt Lake is here (we may have a
slightly ulterior motive) and the restoration of
the gospel. After they have been fed and have
been spoken to, we have a chance to visit with
them. On this occasion I was invited to attend.
There were people there from, as I recall, six-
teen different nations. I visited at some length
with these five from the People's Democratic
Republic of China, and they volunteered infor-
mation to me that in China today only one
child per family is permitted. Family size is
limited by birth control, sterilization, and abor-
tion. If a second child is born, the government
takes it to rear. In my opinion this practice will
destroy China as a nation. The Chinese people
have traditionally almost worshiped their
ancestors. Chinese children are very obedient
to parents, for the most part. It makes a major
difference in what happens in a family when
children obey parents. Probably the Chinese as
an ethnic group have the lowest juvenile delin-
quency rate of any group in the United States,
and it's primarily because of how they feel
about their parents. But something serious is
going to happen if you can't bring forth the
Lord's children.

I saw on TV a documentary recently on
Sweden, where they have been in this social
experiment for some years: a socialistic form
of government where the government assumes
the responsibility for taking care of people
from cradle to grave. There are some who think
that is the way to do it. But they are having a
difficult time in Sweden today because no one
seems to care about old people. No one will
visit old people. You see, the children no longer
have the responsibility to take care of their
parents, and because they don't, they pay no
attention to them. And old people who don't

feel expressions of love die, just as babies die if they don't get loved. I'm persuaded that without expressions of love not only the old and the young die, but also those that are in between die too.

We are to live together in love, and if we love each other, we seem to get along very, very well. Without love it is impossible to please God, for God loves us. Jesus loved us so much that he gave his life for us. The scripture makes it plain that "God so loved the world, that he gave his Only Begotten Son" (John 3:16), and Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Love is vitally important in the gospel of Jesus Christ, in the economy of God. So they have a government program in Sweden today where they hire full-time governmental personnel just to visit old people.

Of course, we are not doing much better in our own country. We had a White House Conference on families last year, which was the Year of the Family (I guess you knew that). When they chose delegates here in Utah—and I am assuming they did it in most other states of the Union, for they chose delegates in every state—they attempted to pass a resolution here defining a family as "any group of people living together." Not the traditional mother, father, children with the father presiding over the family, with the mother supporting the father, bearing the children and caring for them through childhood, but any group of people living together.

Who do you suppose would have been in favor of that kind of a definition? You know. The same ones that are making noises about the Equal Rights Amendment. It's the homosexuals, the lesbians, those who say they are in favor of the "alternative lifestyle." Alternate. Well, obviously, it isn't the Lord's program. President Kimball made a plain statement on this when he said, "Every form of homosexuality is sin" (*Ensign*, November 1974, p. 8). And

so we know what that is. In San Francisco today, 15 percent of the population are gay. Now isn't that a sad commentary?

To Avoid Being Wasted

The Lord indicates that we should seek diligently to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. In fact, he says if that doesn't happen, the whole earth will be smitten with a curse. That is the record of Malachi (see Malachi 4:6). In the second section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we have the statement from the angel Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and he made it a little bit more clear when he said:

Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.

If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming. [D&C 2:1-3]

I have thought much on that, wondering how the earth will be wasted if the children's hearts are not turned to the fathers. There may be a lot of ways the earth could be wasted. But as I think about it some more, some facts are obvious. What was the earth created for, anyway? It is recorded in the book of Abraham, third chapter, and twenty-fourth verse, that the Master said:

We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these [meaning all of us] may dwell;

And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God will command them.

The earth was created so that we would have a place to come and be born, with a body

of flesh and bones, with earthly parents who love us. The first purpose of marriage, of course, is to bring children into the world, according to President Harold B. Lee, and the children ought to be welcome. There should be love surrounding them.

I find that it is vitally important that we live together in love. Children deserve to have parents who love each other with all their hearts. There should be a show of affection between parents, no doubt about that. I've never been able to embrace my wife with my children around without their trying to get into the act. We feel little arms wrapped around our legs, or they try to push between us. Children love to see their parents love each other. There is a great sense of security that comes to children who have parents who do love each other and show it, so it's vitally important that we live together in love. That is what the earth was created for.

What do you suppose will happen if, when the Lord comes, he doesn't find anything but homosexuality and lesbianism and birth control and abortion and sterilization, all of which are rampant upon the earth, as you well know. In other words what will he feel if he finds that we will no longer allow his Father to send his children to this earth? Do you suppose the earth would be wasted as far as he is concerned?

We think the term *wasted* is a modern term. The kids think they made up *wasted* just as they think they made up *gross*, but the Lord said, "This people's heart is waxed gross" (Matthew 13:15) two thousand years ago when he lived on earth. The Lord is way out ahead of us in all these terms.

He says that the earth could be wasted. The only other time he used similar language was back at the time of the flood. He said that the whole earth was corrupted in his sight, that it was wasted. You know what happened then? He destroyed it. I presume he would do the same thing today. And so you and I, who are

children of God, and who have been sent to this earth to carry out the plan of salvation, know that we should marry, for it is ordained of God. Marriage is ordained of God. It is right for people to marry, raise families, and teach them to love the Lord and keep his commandments and walk uprightly before him. If we do so, we will be happy. If we don't, I'm not sure we ever will be.

You almost have to have grandchildren to really be happy here upon this earth; I have found that out. I have seventeen. I have often wondered what it is about grandchildren that makes them so wonderful. I've thought a lot about it, and I think I've figured it out. You can spoil them, and you don't have to live with them. I said that some time ago in a meeting, and a sister came up afterwards and said, "Elder Rector, you are right; grandchildren are wonderful. I have two of them in my home this afternoon, and I said to them, 'If you're not good, you have to go home.' I couldn't say that to my own children."

I'm convinced, too, that great-grandchildren are important to us if we're going to be happy ultimately. We are here upon the earth to raise a family to the Lord. If we don't do it, the earth *will* be wasted.

Children's Hearts to Their Fathers

We may wonder how you turn the children's hearts to the fathers. We have plain directions on how to do it through the admonition of a prophet. You will never turn your own children's hearts more to you than you will if you write a personal history of your life. They will find out a lot of things about you, and they'll find out why they're kind of strange, probably because we're all strange, you know. "Everyone except me and thee—and even thee is a little peculiar." Isn't that how it goes?

I'm convinced that personal histories are vitally important if you are really going to raise up children to love the family relationship—

where children have a good time, where you live together in love, where the father presides as he is supposed to do, and where the mother supports the father and nurtures the children. It's a happy relationship, and children will want it for themselves and their children. They will not want to be homosexuals. I am convinced that homosexuality is an addiction just as surely as pornography and drink and drugs are addictions. There are those who will try to tell you that it's an accident of birth, that there is a female spirit trapped in a male body, or vice versa. I do not believe that that is true. He that made them male and female, and the prophet says that every form of homosexuality is sin. If children want families, they will have families, and that is vitally important. Writing this personal history will tell them a lot about who they are.

I know, for instance, that I stand before you here today primarily because I have a wonderfully fine father. He is as honest and honorable as any man I have ever met. He'd walk ten miles to pay you ten cents he owes you. If he says he'll do it, he'll do it. You don't have to write it down. His word has been his bond all his life. He loves to talk about religion. He is open minded; he will talk to anybody about religion. He never joined a church—hasn't yet, anyway. I'm still working on him. I found out some time ago why he hasn't joined a church: he never met a Protestant minister he thought was better than he was. He may have lacked a little bit in humility, but I never met a Protestant minister I thought was better than my dad either. He is an open-minded man, willing to talk about religion or anything else. I grew up that way.

Also I had a wonderfully fine grandmother. Her name was Lucy Ellen Mason Garvin. We call her Mama Lucy. Mama Lucy believed in the Bible with all her heart. She knew it was true. She lived in a small town of Rennick, Missouri, population 167. I've always suspected that number included the horses and

the cows. But in that small town of 167 back there in central Missouri there were four churches. That was a religious place, and every summer when I had the opportunity to spend a week with her just before school started, there was always a religious revival going on in one of those churches. We went every night. I loved to hear those old revival preachers; they called them evangelists. Of course, they don't know what an evangelist is. That meant a traveling preacher to them. They could preach hell-fire and damnation with the best of them. In fact, they would preach so convincingly that you would look under your chair sometimes to see if there weren't a fire under there. Then they would invite all to "come to Christ" to be saved, to confess Christ. I wanted to do that. I thought that would be important to me or would make a difference to me if I did it. My grandmother would never let me do it because my father had never joined a church, and she thought maybe he wouldn't want me to do that. She didn't want to get in Dutch with him, and so I never was able to go confess Christ. I never did. Some of my friends did, but it didn't seem to make a whole lot of difference to them. They still put potatoes in the exhaust pipes of cars. I don't know whether you ever did that or not. And we'd make mud pies and put them on the headlights. Someone would come out and turn on the headlights—nothing. Of course, there wasn't very much light even if there wasn't a mud pie on the headlight because the headlights on the cars back in that day and time were so people could see you; you couldn't see a thing with them. And you had to be a mechanic to make a car run, back in those days. (One farmer said to his friend, "How much do you get out of your car?" And his friend said, "About four times a mile.")

Every night after the revival meeting, I wound up by sitting on Mama Lucy's lap, and she read to me out of a great big old picture Bible. There were some of the wildest pictures in there that you have ever seen. Hell was a

horrible place. There were fire and brimstone. People there were naked, and these characters with pitchforks were sticking them, and they had horns on their heads and forked tails. I knew I didn't want to get in that place. I knew that. That was impressed upon me. And heaven was always a beautiful place. There were angels there. They were always female, and my grandmother was sure that no man would ever be worthy of this exalted station. When the elders told me about Moroni's visit, and they said he was a man, I said, "Are you sure?"

Writing It Down

When the elders knocked on my door, they found someone who was open minded, was willing to talk about religion, read all kinds of books on religion because I was looking for the truth and believed the Bible with all my heart (my grandmother had seen to that). I was a pushover for the missionaries, and I'm sure it was, to a great extent, the way I was raised. I had to write all that down. It is vitally important that you write it down because if you don't write it down, you cannot be sure that it happened.

The Prophet Joseph Smith seems to indicate that, in section 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants, where he tells us how important it is that we write things down. In this section, he emphasizes not only that we write it down, but that we put down witnesses, names. He says, beginning with verse 5:

You may think this order of things to be very particular; but let me tell you that it is only to answer the will of God, by conforming to the ordinance and preparation that the Lord ordained and prepared before the foundation of the world, for the salvation of the dead who should die without a knowledge of the gospel.

And further, I want you to remember that John the Revelator was contemplating this very subject

in relation to the dead, when he declared as you will find recorded in Revelation 20:12—

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

You will discover in this quotation that the books were opened: and another book was opened, which was the book of life; but the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books [with an s], according to their works; consequently, the books spoken of must be the books which contained the record of their works and refer to the records which are kept on the earth. . . .

Sometimes we get the idea, "Well, it won't make any difference whether it's recorded here because it's recorded in heaven." Don't be too sure. The Prophet continues:

Now, the nature of this ordinance consists in the power of the priesthood, by the revelation of Jesus Christ, wherein it is granted that whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Or, in other words, taking a different view of the translation, whatsoever you record on earth shall be recorded in heaven, and whatsoever you do not record on earth shall not be recorded in heaven. [D&C 128:8]

Does that sound as if maybe you'd better write it? I think so. If you really want to get credit for it, you'd better write it down.

I am convinced that it is not what we do here upon this earth that will condemn us at the last day, anyway. No, because if we do something wrong, we can repent of it, can't we? You see, the Lord Jesus Christ granted repentance to us all. That is not going to hurt us, for those sins will be blotted out. If we did

something good, and we record that, we will get credit for it. So you see, it's not what we do, it's what we don't do that we're going to have a rough time repenting of at the last day. So we ought to write it. Let's write it down. It is vitally important that we do. And then the record is in heaven.

Now you say, "Well, they keep a record in the temple anyway."

The International Genealogical Index is a record, no doubt about that. It is an index to the temple record which is a record of ordinances performed, but do you know what's on that record? Well, if we have your birthdate, that will be there. If you're baptized, that will be there. If you're confirmed, that will be there. If you've been endowed in the temple, that will be there. If you've been sealed, that will be there too, along with the witnesses' names and the name of the sealer, but that's all that's there. Is that how you want to be judged?

Matthew records the Lords' words:

When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them from another, as a shepherd that divideth his sheep from the goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

Are you sure it was me? Have you ever been given credit for something you didn't do, I mean something good? Isn't that a horrible feeling? I can imagine that a righteous person wouldn't want to be given credit for something he didn't do. He might say, "Lord, people do look a lot alike, you know. Are you sure you don't have me mixed up with someone else?"

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. [Matthew 25:31-40]

I'm convinced that you'd better write it down. Yes, you'll find out a lot about yourself as you write your personal history. You think, "Well, I don't have time to do it. Besides, my history is not anything too exciting anyway. Nobody would ever be excited about it. I don't have anything to write." Just in case you feel that way, I'd like to read you a couple of excerpts. These are very simple records. The first one is entitled "Dear Abby" (you've heard of her).

A great man died today. He wasn't a world leader or a famous doctor or a war hero or a sports figure or a business tycoon. But he was a great man. He was my father.

He didn't get his picture in the paper for heading up committees; I guess you might say he was a person who never cared for credit or honor. He did corny things—like pay his bills on time, go to church on Sunday, and hold an office in the PTA.

He helped his kids with their homework and drove his wife to the shopping center to do the grocery buying on Thursday night. He enjoyed hauling his kids and their friends to and from football games. He enjoyed simple things—a picnic in the park, country music, mowing the grass, and running with the dog.

Tonight is the first night of my life without him. I don't know what to do with myself so I am writing to you. I am sorry for the times I didn't show him the proper respect. But I'm thankful for many things.

I'm thankful because God let me have him for 15 years. And I'm thankful that I was able to let him know how much I loved him. He died with a smile on his face; he knew he was a success as a husband, a father, a son, a brother, and a friend. I wonder how many millionaires can say that. Thank you for listening. You've been a great help! Signed, His Daughter.

Now that's not earth shaking. I know that, but it's great literature, isn't it? You know why? Because it comes from the heart, and anything that comes from the heart is great literature. I want to read you one more if I might. This is by Ed Bartley who is an English professor back east. He has written several articles in syndicated magazines.

He was working frantically trying to prepare a test on Melville for his English students the next day when his 22-month-old child, Meghan, came up with a pile of storybooks and a pleading look.

The Poky Little Puppy, The Magic Bus, The Cat in the Hat, *even that ancient copy of National Geographic with the penguin on the cover . . . she had them all.*

With her free hand, she tugs at my sleeve.

"No Meghan," I snap irritably, "not now. Go away and leave me alone. And take your library with you."

That does it; she leaves. She makes no further attempt to bother me. I can finish the test easily now without interference. No one trying to climb onto my lap, no extra fingers helping me type.

[Have you ever been typing along and a mystery key flied right in the middle of what you're doing? You look down and there's a very small finger on a typewriter key.]

I see her standing quietly with her back against the sofa, tears running down her cheeks. She has two fingers of her right hand in her mouth. She holds the tragic [doll] Dumpty in her left. She watches me type and slowly brushes the tip of Dumpty's anemic arm across her nose to comfort her.

At this moment, only for a moment, I see things as God must—in perspective, with all the pieces fitting. I see a little girl cry because I haven't time for her. Imagine ever being that important to another human being! I see the day when it won't mean so much to a tiny soul to have me sit next to her and read a story, one that means little to either of us, realizing somehow that it is the sitting next to each other that means everything. [Have you ever had anybody badger you for half an hour to read a book, and, when you start to read, you make mistakes and they can correct you? They know it by heart, but they have got to have a book read.]

And I see the day when the frail, loyal, and lovable doll Dumpty will vanish from the life of a little girl who has outgrown him.

I resent Dumpty for an instant. He is consoling my girl, and that is my concern, not his. She and I have few enough days like this to share. So the paper slips gently into the top drawer, the hood slides over the typewriter. The test will get done somehow. Tests always get done.

"Meghan, I feel like taking a walk down to the park. I was wondering if you . . . would care to join me. I thought maybe you'd like to go on the swings for a while. Bring Dumpty—and your red sweater too. It might be windy down there."

At the word "park" the fingers leave the mouth. She laughs excitedly and begins a frantic search for her shoes and socks. [Have you ever had anybody badger you for half an hour to go with you, and then, you say yes, you have to spend fifteen minutes looking for shoes? When that happens, you know everything is right on schedule. That's the way it's supposed to be.]

Melville will have to wait, but he won't mind. He waited most of his life for someone to discover

the miracle of Moby Dick—and died 30 years before anyone did. No, he won't mind.

Besides, he'd understand why I must go right now, while [birds] still spark wonder and before dandelions become weeds, and while a little girl thinks that a leaf from her father is a gift beyond measure. ["Now, While There's Time," Reader's Digest, December 1969, p. 103–4]

I'm convinced that you could all write something like that. It's vitally important that you do so.

Record Keeping

I'm sure you'll never turn your own hearts more to your own fathers than by writing a family history, because you have to find out about them before you can write about them. There may be someone who is noble and great, and I'm sure that your whole line is, because you see, you're here—and not by happenstance. You're not an accident of birth; someone has paid the price to get you here. These are noble people. Maybe they've never had an opportunity to write it themselves, but you can write it. And if you write it, they'll be judged by what you write. President Kimball said, before the World Conference on Records:

There are 78 large volumes that I have written of my life. Sometimes I come home at night, and I am so tired I feel I can't do it. But then I rest a while and then I do it.

If the prophet can do that, you can too. He also said, "If you write your personal history, the angels may quote from it one day."

I believe that because there are angels up there waiting for you, praying for you. Sometimes they rejoice over you, and sometimes they don't. But if you write it, you'll get the credit for it. Do you suppose you could become a savior on Mount Zion by doing something like that? The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "The greatest responsibility in this world

that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead" (*Teachings*, p. 356). He also said, "Those Saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation" (*Teachings*, p. 193).

Personal history. Family history. You write it. Then you ought to do your four generations—yes, four generations, a pedigree chart and the family group sheets to go with it—and submit them to the ancestral file. We're going to computerize that file one day. It will be available for all. There will be those who join the Church and can put their name in that computer, and we'll find out everything that has been done on their line so that they don't have to duplicate the work.

There are many people for whom we need to do this work. The smart people say that about 68 billion people have lived upon this earth. Can you imagine that? I can't even understand how much a billion is. They tell me a stack of brand new one-thousand-dollar bills 4 ½ inches high is a million dollars. If you want to make that into a billion dollars, the stack would be 333 ⅓ feet high—longer than a football field plus a third. That's the difference between a million and a billion.

Sixty-eight billion people? If you were standing on a football field and let the 68 years from the goal line represent that 68 billion people, that's about how far McMahon threw that last touchdown pass, right? (Wasn't that exciting? I loved it. I have to watch it over now and again just to make sure he did it.) You're looking at the goal line. If those 68 years represent 68 billion people, everything we have done so far since the restoration of the gospel would have moved that football about an inch and a quarter toward the goal line.

You see what we have to do? We have got a lot to do. We don't need to duplicate things, so we're going to fix it up so we won't have to, but you are going to have to prepare you four-generation sheets and then go as far beyond as you can. Get them out there because there are

people who are waiting for you to do it. They will rejoice over you if you do; and if you don't, you neglect it at the peril of your own salvation; that's how the Prophet Joseph said it. I believe that that is true.

Then you ought to go to the temple and do as many endowments as you can as often as you can—as many as is practical for you to do. That's part of your responsibility.

Nephi wrote a personal history; we have it here. Angels have been quoting it for centuries. Who says that they won't quote yours too? But you have to write it. That's vitally important—that you do it. The way you do that is to get started. I like to carry pages with me all the time out of a looseleaf journal, and when I have a few minutes, I can write down something. Then when I finish that, I just stick it back in my journal and take out a few more blank pages, and I'm always ready to do it. You can use this system too—or one of your own. It is important because it has to do with the eternal salvation of your family, which is the most important unit in time or all eternity.

I'll close with verses 22–24 from section 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants, where the Prophet Joseph Smith says,

Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren, and on, on to the victory. Let our hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoner shall go free.

Let the mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud; and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your Eternal King! And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with gladness. Let the woods and all the trees of the field praise the Lord; and ye solid rocks weep for joy! And let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy! And let the eternal

creations declare his name forever and ever! And again I say, how glorious is the voice we hear from heaven, proclaiming in our ears, glory, and salvation, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life; kingdoms, principalities, powers!

Behold, the great day of the Lord is at hand; and who can abide the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appeareth? . . .

Do you know who can stand? He tells us right here:

Let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance.

Those can stand, and I doubt seriously if anyone else can. Therefore, it is for us to do. And you have to get about it. The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step, and you can start today. Will you do it? I pray that you will, and there are those on the other side praying that you will. When you get started, you will have help from them. I know you will.

Something Nice

As I traveled about the Church promoting the World Conference on Records, Elder Packer said one day to me, "Hartman, because of what you're doing, the Lord will do something nice for you." It's always exciting when the Lord starts doing nice things for you. (He meant in genealogy.)

It was shortly thereafter that I got a letter from a new convert. His parents were not members of the Church, but they were living in Friday Harbor, Washington, and they had some friends up there by the name of Rector, Ed and Eleanor Rector, to be factual. This young man said he had been in Eleanor Rector's home, and there were at least 5,000 Rector family group sheets that she had filled out, and he wondered if I'd be interested in them. He said, "She's very ill. She has terminal cancer and she may not live."

I asked, "Do you suppose she would live until November?" I was going up for the dedication of the Seattle Temple.

He said, "Oh, I think so."

We went to the temple dedication, and then we went on up to Friday Harbor. We had to ride the ferry for two hours to get there, after we got up to Anacortes. There she gave me five

volumes of family group sheets. There must be more than 30,000 Rectors in there. They are all my line. You see, the Lord will do something nice for you if you'll start doing something for those who can't do it for themselves—of which I bear witness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.